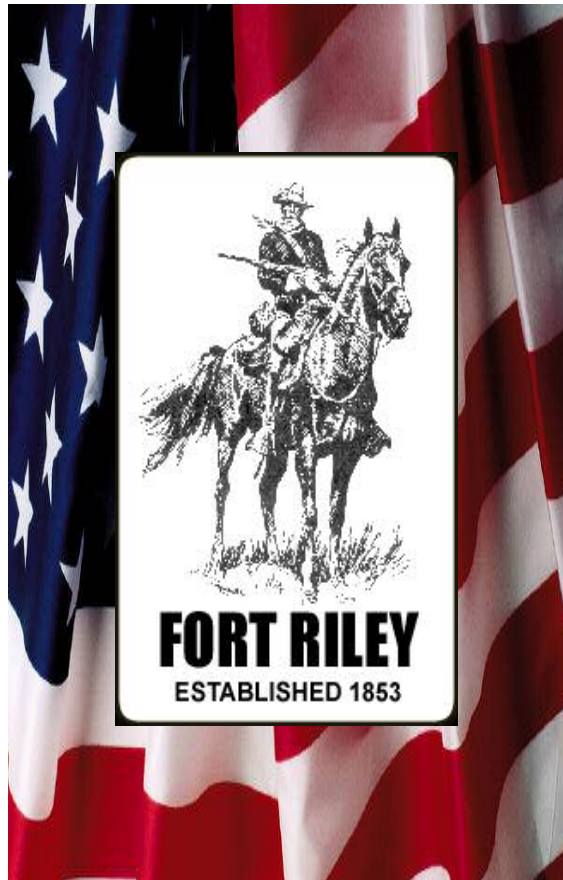




Leaders and Suicide Prevention



Stronger soldiers, more effective units - an invincible combination!



Suicide Prevention

Presented by the
Ft. Riley
Command Team

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PURPOSE

Inform all leaders and soldiers on vital
information and tips
related to suicide awareness.

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REFERENCE

- **Suicide Prevention** *Soldiers Magazine Hot Topics*, Current Issues for Army Leaders
Published by the Office of the Chief of
Public Affairs, Spring 2000

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Some Army Statistics



- Army suicides on the increase
- Training to young soldiers not enough
- Senior officers and senior NCOs risk

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Taking a Proactive Approach



- Leaders, all soldiers *can* prevent suicides
- All soldiers must know how to respond
- Personal responsibility by all
- 24 hour/7 day vigilance/caring

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Suicide Prevention Checklist

- Practice Proactive Prevention
- Leader, soldier education
- Listen and watch more closely
- Attitude checks
- Encourage help-seeking behaviors
- Buddy care goes for this too!`

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Can You Be an Effective Leader for Suicide Prevention?

- The necessary attitude is?...
- Level with yourself (about your attitude):
 - Do I believe they're weak?
 - Do I attach stigmas?
 - Could I seek help?

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Predicting Suicide



- No single factor, but in reviewing cases:
 - Relationship Problems or Breakups
 - Failures, legal problems
 - Alcohol and Drugs
 - Has the means (privately owned weapon)
 - Prior Attempts
 - Hopelessness
 - Feels Alone

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Army Suicides Go UP in Number When:

- Scape-goating, Humiliation, Ostracizing
- Not proactive
- Not in tune with each other
- Not educated on signs
- Help-seeking discouraged
- Buddies don't take action

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Army Suicides Go DOWN in Number When:

- *All* soldiers part of the team
- Proactive, regular prevention
- Teach the signs and buddy aid
- Identify at-risk soldiers and *act*
- Encourage help seeking
- Encourage initiative in buddies

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Know The Risks

- Soldiers are at increased risk for suicide when:
 - Depression & Substance Abuse
 - Previous suicide attempts
 - Recent relationship failure
 - Legal problems

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Typical Questions & Myths



- **What about the Army's suicide rate?**
- **Prevention training how often?**
- **A typical soldier suicide profile?**
- **Women and minority suicides?**
- **The most common suicide method?**
- **What is "suicide contagion"?**

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Myths



- People who commit suicide are crazy
- Good circumstances prevent suicide
- People who talk about suicide will not commit suicide
- People who threaten suicide, or do not succeed with an attempt, are not at risk for suicide

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More Myths



- Talking about suicide will put the idea into someone's head
- People who are deeply depressed do not have the energy to commit suicide
- People often commit suicide without warning

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Misconceptions



- Improvement means the risk is over
- If someone survives an attempt, it must have been a manipulative act
- Do not reinforce the behavior by listening to vague references about suicide

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Encourage Soldiers to get Help for Depression

- Depression is a major cause of suicide.
- Professional help *essential*
- Help-seeking *must be encouraged*
- Depression is *complex*

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Symptoms of Depression Include:

- Persistent sad mood, tearfulness, crying;
- Confusion, apathy;
- Poor sleep patterns (too much, too little)
- Poor appetite patterns (eats too much, loses appetite);
- Expresses feelings of hopelessness or helplessness;
- Shows impaired judgement and thinking;
- Makes suicidal statements.

With assistance and proper treatment, 80 to 90 percent of people with depression can be helped.

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Stress to Your Soldiers:



- *Don't* ignore a problem
- *Don't* bury the problem
- *Do* express concern
- *Do* intervene

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Useful Acronyms

- **Provide AID**
 - Ask. Don't be afraid to ask
 - Intervene.
 - Don't keep it a secret.
- **Think LIFE**
 - Locate help.
 - Inform the chain of command.
 - Find someone to stay with the person.
 - Expedite

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What To Do

- Never leave the person alone
- Get medical attention
- Call the Chain of Command
- Community Mental Health
- Unit Chaplain
- 239-HELP

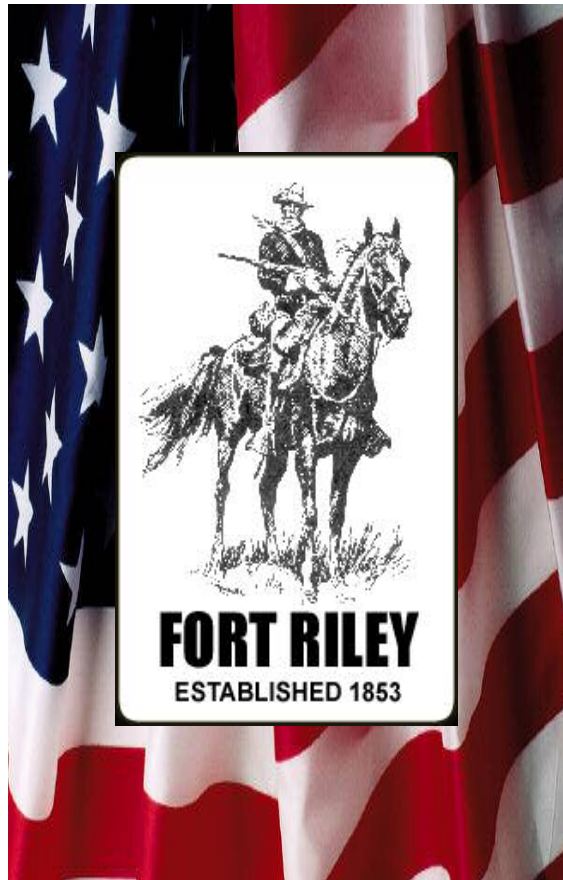
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Conclusion

- Examine our attitudes
- There's hope if we keep aware
- *All* soldiers are responsible

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